

AN
ADDRESS

TO THE

SOCIETY OF MIDDLESEX HUSBANDMEN

AND

MANUFACTURERS,

DELIVERED AT CONCORD, OCTOBER 7, 1846.

BY JOHN G. PALFREY,
OF CAMBRIDGE.

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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: —

I PRESENT myself before you for a hearing with extremely humble claims. I am not qualified to address an assembly of intelligent farmers. I have no practical knowledge of agriculture, or even of gardening. I say it not without shame, and with very great regret. More than half of the time since I was fifteen years of age I have lived in a farming county of Massachusetts, and for fifteen years I have been the owner of some acres within its limits. They continue much as I received them, good for little else but to hold the world together. I ought to have found means to redeem time from the other pursuits which have employed me, to devote to a pursuit which so strengthens the body, humanizes and enforces the mind, enlarges and intenerates the soul. I ought by this time to have put my sand and bogs in a state to enter into the competition for your prize for reclaiming wastes. Perhaps it may not yet be altogether too late to begin. In the mean time, in acknowledgment of your very flattering invitation, I can only offer you to-day a few such remarks as may be within the capacity of an inexperienced and unskilled, but by no means uninterested, observer. They will be confined to the subject of AGRICULTURE; for though your Association extends its care to another important branch of industry, I presume its attention to be principally devoted to the former subject, as I observe that last year, among twenty premiums, or more, only one was offered for manufactured articles; and though the two subjects have mutual relations of the most important kind, it would be aiming at quite too much to attempt to treat of them together within so short a time.

The industrial prosperity of our Commonwealth, fellow-citizens, has been commonly considered abroad to lie in the departments of manufactures and commerce. "Of natural productions," said a Southern orator, a few years ago, "Massachusetts exports but two articles, granite and ice; absolutely nothing but granite and ice." The remark was a long way from being accurate, when it was made. It would be much further from the truth now. Massachusetts has become known for her agricultural skill, industry, and prosperity. Says the Secretary of the New York State Agricultural Society, as I find in the volume of its Transactions for 1843, — "The Empire State is indebted to Massachusetts for almost every superior implement of husbandry; and her agricultural products, upon a soil far less fertile and favorable for cultivation than ours, are such as to require the most efficient system of husbandry to equal her." This is flattering language for one living on the bottomless loam of Western New York to use of the tillage of our expanse of sand, gravel, and rock.

Fellow-citizens, Massachusetts may and should become a great agricultural State, and to have her known in that character ought to be the ambition of her husbandmen, and of her people in every walk of life. Several things go to the production of a good agriculture. / Two of them are *climate* and *soil*. But climate and soil are by no means the only ones, and it is far from certain that they are even the most important. The climate of Old England is no better, the soil is no better, — except as far as the art of man has made it so, — than they were twenty centuries ago, when Julius Cæsar found the half-naked inhabitants living on milk and acorns. But what a garden has that little country become under the hands of an intelligent culture! It is this, and nothing else, which feeds the mouths of twenty millions of people, with their immense number of laboring and other domestic animals, — including not far from fifty millions of sheep, — on a soil which, within less than the age of man, only sustained nine millions. Formerly, according to Professor Hitchcock, the average yield of wheat in Great Britain was only nine bushels to the acre. Now, it is more than nineteen bushels, and in several counties of England and Scotland, the average rises to fifty bushels. / From her

arable soil, of only about thirty-four millions of acres, — less by one tenth than the surface of the State of Virginia, — five millions of persons, of all ages, produce annually seven hundred millions of dollars' worth of agricultural products, averaging about one hundred and forty dollars' worth to every man, woman, and child of her agricultural population. According to Mr. McCulloh, the soil and agriculture of Great Britain, in 1837, furnished food sufficient for the comfortable subsistence of three millions more inhabitants than in 1820 ; and he estimates the product of the wheat crop to be between three and four times as great as in the year 1765, the year of the Stamp Act, only eighty-one years ago. /

As to climate and soil, in the most obvious way of viewing them, it must be allowed that Providence has not particularly favored us. Our climate is neither one of the best, nor one of the worst, for cultivation. Our summers are short, but while their time lasts, with their fervid heats, they are very busy at their work. They are very favorable to the growth of maize, one of the most valuable articles of sustenance for man, and to that of the grasses, which, in the pasture and the barn, give a living to his herds and flocks. The potato loves a moister atmosphere, and we do not generally bring it to its highest perfection ; but the Report of the Assessors of the Towns, of five millions of bushels raised in Massachusetts in 1844, — a statement certainly far below the truth, — shows that the culture is not carried on entirely at disadvantage ; and certainly we should be very ungrateful to complain of a climate, which, with all its capricious extremes and alternations, contrives to yield us, year by year, such a magnificent and abundant variety of choice esculent vegetables and fruits, giving us side by side the hardier roots of the North, and the peaches and melons of Persia and Egypt.

Our soil, certainly, taken as a whole, is none of the richest. Neither the sand-banks of the coast, nor the rock-ribbed hills of the interior, smile upon the farmer with quite the same promise of luxuriance as the Shenandoah bottom, or the alluvium of the Mississippi. But, really, if agricultural science continues to make advances as it has done of late, it would seem as if natural soil was about the last thing that the farmer

need to give himself any concern about. Things seem to be coming to that pass, that a man need care no more about the quality of the ground on which he stakes out his garden, than of that in which he digs the cellar to his house. If it is not solid rock, so that neither ploughshare nor spade will pierce it, that is about all he wants. The chemists seem to be in a fair way to teach us how, out of any given surface whatever, — soil or not, provided it can be turned over, — to make any soil we want, for any cultivation, by a skilful application of cheap manures.

I remember, many years ago, while enjoying with a distinguished citizen of this county the rich beauty and fragrance of his beautiful garden, congratulating him on the natural advantages he must have enjoyed for the creation of such a paradise. “Natural advantages!” said he; “the powder that blew the rocks where this garden stands cost me two hundred dollars.” That was an extreme case, though probably even in that the proprietor had his compensation for the heavy original cost, by means of the fine site and exposure. But, in truth, clay, gravel, sand, and flint-stones are all yielding to chemistry. An intelligent man has now only to look out a surface of proper dimensions for his purpose, and within reach of a market, and buy the right to fence it round as his own, and to have God’s sunshine and rain fall upon it for his benefit, and then go on to make it productive, — whether it be disposed or not, — to make it productive for one thing or another, according to the plan he may have in view. From the heaps of forest-leaves, from the drifts of refuse sea-weed, from the fields of sea-shells and bones along the beaches, from the peat-bog and the mud-bottom, from the fatness of the barn-floor and the sty, he can season his soil, as the cookery-books say, according to his taste. If his sterile acres seem at first to be puny and feeble colaborers, he can dose and feed them with such generous medicaments into a genial salubrity and a portly robustness.

But, fellow-citizens, what do we mean when we speak of a good soil and a good climate? In my poor judgment, there is no better soil and climate than ours, under the wide span of this beautiful heaven, for agriculture or for any other purpose.

It was a gracious Providence, ever mindful of the good, and of their posterity to the latest generation, which overruled the intention of our Plymouth founders, and, instead of conducting them to the haven where they would be in Hudson's River, brought them, for their stern sheltering-place, within the sandy and stormy capes of Massachusetts Bay. It was a benignant Providence, which, when their Puritan fellow-soldier urged upon them the gift of the most luxurious island of the West Indian seas, inclined their hearts to cleave still to the hard but loving bosom of their New England home. / We have a climate and soil adapted to the production of steady and efficient *men*, and therefore most fit for the cultivation of every thing else worth producing. When the Lord God gave to Adam the commission to replenish the earth and subdue it, he made Adam's children capable of subduing the earth just in proportion to their capacity of exercising any other kind of dominion ; and that capacity consists in vigorous frames and vigorous souls. / Look not for the successful farmer, any more than the successful any thing else, under a discipline where all is ease and luxury. Look not for the efficient man in any department amid the enervating softness of tropical breezes, and the luxuriance of a spontaneous fertility. Look for him, — if you mean to look in the right place, — where he has to subdue the rugged, and force the reluctant, powers of nature. It is hardship that begets hardihood ; it is struggle that makes strong characters ; and sharp toil and the habit of contending with difficulties are the life-giving medicine for body and mind. From these come industry, economy, temperance, invention, resource, self-reliance, manliness. And these are the "wealth of nations," not only in a moral estimate, but in the estimate of a wise political economy. / All the science, to which Adam Smith was father, gets not a step further than those Bible doctrines, — that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that godliness, with its kindred, is *profitable* for all things.

/ Ask me for the climate and soil where agriculture will flourish most ; I answer, they are those in which man most flourishes. Give me the man, — the resolute and inventive man, — and I know the thing will be done, whether it be the building of a pyramid or the growth of an onion. / I cannot

guess, fellow-citizens, what would have become of that offset from the stout Anglo-Saxon stock, to which we belong, if we had been sent away by a falsely indulgent fate to some more attractive region, to suck in a voluptuous pleasure with the fragrant softness of an Asiatic atmosphere, or breathe out our gentle souls in sentimental raptures under the sunset glories of an Italian sky. But I know what has become of it under severer, but more congenial and more happy influences. Here we must work hard for what we want. Thence comes the strong and busy hand of the diligent, that at length maketh rich. We do not incline to waste what has cost us such pains, or what may make our labors easier or more productive ; thence comes the wise frugality, that guideth its affairs with discretion. We must be up and doing with the dawn, to make the most of our few long days ; thence comes the cheerful heart that doeth good like a medicine. With so much to do, we need to have clear heads and strong nerves ; and this enforces that temperance which the Apostle says is needful to him who would strive for the mastery in every thing. / Nature, among us genial under coercion, but averse, and wayward, and austere without it, will not do our bidding unless we guide and goad her ; and so she gives the training of the cunning hand, and the forecasting and contriving head. The Massachusetts country boy, in his frolic days, is the wild and fearless playmate of the winter storms. He springs at daybreak from his light and healthy sleep to wade through the snow to fodder his cattle at the barn, and then to take another wade to feed his own mind at the school-house. From this comes the wholesome flow of blood, and the buoyant and resolute heart. And from all this discipline together comes a *man*, capable of taming any thing that he needs to be served by, and may honestly compel to serve him, and accordingly capable of taming the earth, and making it yield its richness to him and his.

I may seem to have anticipated, in substance, the next remark I have to make, which is, that Massachusetts ought to be a flourishing agricultural State, in comparison with others seemingly more favored by nature, because, unlike theirs, *her soil is tilled by freemen*. If you are looking for a well conducted agriculture, you must turn away from nature's Eden

in Georgia, Louisiana, Virginia. You must come to where free sinews break the soil of Pennsylvania, New England, New York. Slaveholders cannot be good farmers. To a great extent, their luxurious and improvident habits prevent it. But, independently of this, the labor they employ is not the proper kind of labor to carry on farming in the best style. It is despicably inefficient, compared with that employed by the husbandman who himself works with his people, and whose fellow-laborers are partly his sons, with the same interest as himself to do every thing and save every thing, and partly hired men, who do the better for themselves the better they do for him, who are inmates of his home, who sit at his table, who talk over his plans with him, and share in the emulation and pride with which he watches his own experiments and his own industry, compared with those of his neighbours.

An eminent statesman of the South not long ago said, that the emancipation of the slaves of that region would annihilate a money value of twelve hundred millions of dollars. In my humble opinion, never did a more erroneous statement proceed from the merest tyro in political economy. In my judgment, the estimated twelve hundred millions of dollars' worth of men, women, and children are not worth a dollar ; — I mean, of course, considered apart from all questions of humanity and morals, and rated merely as producers of articles of value, like the horse or ox ; — and I mean, also, they are not worth it considered as slaves, which they must needs be, or no money value whatever could be attached to them. Of course, in one sense, any thing, — man, or beast, or stone, or stock (wooden stock or fancy stock), — is worth to its possessor any amount which he may find a purchaser foolish enough to pay for it in the market. But what I say is, that the labor you can get out of a slave costs you more, in proportion to its amount, than the service he would render you, if you would make the nominal sacrifice, set him free outright, and pay him honest wages, instead of the spare diet and clothing you allow him now. That operation, unless you could sell him to somebody who knew no better, would eventually put money in your pocket.

I have argued this question at length elsewhere, and will not

weary your patience with it now. A short statement of the matter is this. A slaveholder does not get his work done for nothing, nor for the interest merely of the investment in his human chattel. He has to pay regular wages to his laborers, partly by the day, partly by the year. He does not call the money that he pays them *wages*, but the name he calls it by makes no difference in the true balance of profit and loss. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." He has to provide them food, clothing, and shelter, more or less, or else they would not be kept alive to work for him.

And what does he get for his outlay, and what must he get, as long as the parties stand so related? He gets the services of lazy, incompetent, careless, wasteful laborers, — lazy, incompetent, careless, and wasteful, because there is none of that interest of their own at stake, which, according to the constitution of man, as God made him, is the one thing needful to set his hands and his mind profitably to work; so that it is a maxim, even in the South, where they know little of what the best description of free labor is, that the labor of one freeman is worth that of two slaves. They stand talking and fooling, or lie down and burrow in the cane-shade, as soon as the overseer's eye is off; they are as cunning in breaking the tools, so as at once to escape a flogging for the mischief, and get a holiday by being sent off to have them mended, as a freeman would be ingenious in mending them himself, so as to help the business on. If they have two pecks of corn to feed a horse, it is all the same to them if one goes into his rack and the other under his feet, but a better place than either for one or both to go is into their own bag. They cannot be forced to be any more capable for work than they already are; and to become more capable and useful is no concern at all of theirs, but the contrary. It is no object to them, by improving their capacity, to increase their labors. They have no wish to raise their own market price, and make it for their master's interest to sell them away from their friends, or cause him to hold them at a high rate, if they propose to buy their own freedom.

With such motives acting, and their opposites not acting, on the laborers, who would undertake to carry on farming to any advantage? If you would see the difference between the

results of slave labor and free, look at the contiguous counties along the border line of Pennsylvania and Virginia. I select this region for comparison, because no one who knows Pennsylvania would name her as a State of peculiar intelligence. Except in the single great particular of freedom, there is, unhappily, remarkably little difference between her laborers and those of the sister State on her southern frontier. The comparison therefore illustrates remarkably well the different results, as to agricultural industry, of the free institutions on one side of the line, and the domestic institution on the other. On the one side, the exhausted soil, the great wastes and barrens, the slovenly grain and tobacco fields, the tumble-down cabins, the *Virginia* fences, show what may be expected where a lazy rich man undertakes to make a lazy poor man do his work for him. On the other, the solid limestone walls, inclosing, in vast stretches up gentle hill and though smiling valley, the heavily nodding heads of the golden harvest, — the great limestone barns, looking like the accomplishment of the plan of him who said he must pull down his barns and build greater, because he had no place where to bestow his fruits and his goods, — the great heaps of pulverized lime and of barn-yard fatness, waiting to be poured into the soil to repair the last year's exhaustion, — these show what widely different results may be looked for where every man, high or low, rich or poor, is, in one form or another, working and scheming for his own advantage.

But, fellow-citizens, for the sake of illustrating one point alone, that of the direct industrial results of mere slavery and freedom, I have assumed a very unfavorable case, — the case of a State in which freedom has by no means been accompanied, to a proper degree, with its proper results of intelligence and cultivation of the mind and character. Let me say, further yet, that Massachusetts ought to be an eminently flourishing agricultural State, because it is a State *in which common schools eminently flourish*. I know very well that that blessed institution has higher objects than those of mere industrial activity and skill. But what then? A beneficent Providence has made all various good influences, of however different kinds, to consist, and conspire, and coöperate with each other ;

and it is no disparagement, but quite the contrary, to what may be recognized as the most useful consequences from a useful cause, to point out others which may be less apparent. In respect to the mere increase of industrial power and resource, our Common School system is working like a charm. I know not to what other cause to ascribe it so much as to them, that, "so far as this Union is concerned, four fifths of all the improvements, inventions, and discoveries, in regard to machinery, to agricultural implements, to superior models in ship-building, and to the manufacture of those refined instruments on which accuracy in scientific observations depends, have originated in New England."* There are some statistics relating to the relative capacity of operatives which struck me with amazement, as well as delight, when I first saw them. And yet, on reflection, my only surprise was that they had surprised me at all. I ought to have known that it would be so. I refer to statistics gathered a few years ago, under the care of the able and indefatigable Secretary of the Board of Education; and the conclusions they establish in respect to manufacturing industry are, I conceive, not only equally applicable, but applicable to a still greater extent, to industry employed in agriculture.

At the request of Mr. Mann, some of the gentlemen connected with different manufacturing companies in the Commonwealth made out schedules of the workmen and workwomen in their employ, arranging them according to the amount of wages which they respectively earned; and then proceeded to inquire what amount of common school instruction they had enjoyed respectively, with a view to ascertain whether there was any proportion between their present power of earning and their past advantages for learning. I cannot undertake to recite the particulars of the beautiful result to which this scrutiny led. They may be read in Mr. Mann's Fifth Report, for the year 1841. I must be content with a specimen or two.

One most intelligent gentleman, connected with establishments which constantly employed three thousand persons, gave, as results of his observations, — "1. That the rudiments

* Fifth Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, p. 108.

of a common school education are essential to the attainment of skill and expertness on the part of laborers ; 2. That very few, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a common school education, ever rise above the lowest class of operatives ; and that the labor of this class, when employed in manufacturing operations which require even a very moderate degree of manual or mental dexterity, is unproductive ; 3. That a large majority of the overseers, and others employed in situations which require a high degree of skill in particular branches, have made their way up from the condition of common laborers, with no other advantage over a large proportion of those they have left behind, than that derived from a better education."

Proceeding, then, to particulars, derived from the books of one of the mills under the direction of his house, which he affirms may be taken as a fair index of all the others, he says : — "The average number of operatives annually employed, for the last three years, is twelve hundred. Of this number, there are forty-five unable to write their own names, or about three and three fourths *per cent.* Of the forty-five who are unable to write, twenty-nine, or about two thirds, are employed in the lowest department. / The difference between the wages earned by the forty-five and the average wages of an equal number of the better educated class, is about twenty-seven *per cent.* in favor of the latter." "My belief is," he continues, "that the best cotton-mill in New England, with such operatives only as these forty-five, who are unable to write their names, would never yield the proprietors a profit, and that the machinery would soon be worn out." "The difference between the wages earned by twenty-nine of the lowest class, and the same number in the higher, is sixty-six *per cent.*" "Sixty-three persons were imported from Manchester, in England, in 1839. Among these persons, there was scarcely one who could read or write, and although a part of them had been accustomed to work in cotton-mills, yet, from incapacity or idleness, they were unable to earn sufficient to pay for their subsistence, and, at the expiration of a few weeks, not more than half a dozen remained in our employment." *

Another gentleman in a similar position says : — "On our

* *Ibid.* pp. 90 - 92.

pay-roll for the last month are borne the names of twelve hundred and twenty-nine female operatives, forty of whom re-eceipted for their pay by making their mark. Twenty-six of these were paid according to the quantity of work turned off from their machines. The average pay of these twenty-six falls eighteen and one half *per cent.* below the general average of those engaged in the same departments. Again; we have in our mills about one hundred and fifty females who have, at some time, been engaged in teaching schools. Many of them teach during the summer months, and work in the mills in winter. The average wages of these ex-teachers I find to be seventeen and three fourths *per cent.* above the general average of our mills, and about forty *per cent.* above the wages of the twenty-six who cannot write their names." *

An experienced manufacturer told Mr. Mann, that "on substituting, in one of his cotton-mills, a better for a poorer educated class of operatives, he was enabled to add twelve or fifteen *per cent.* to the speed of his machinery without any increase of damage or danger from the acceleration."

Now, what does all this mean, expressed in general terms? It means that Massachusetts, by means of her common schools, adds immensely to the amount and quality of her productive labor. Schooling works here something like the addition made to the productive resources of England by the application of steam-power. As to manufactures, this is ascertained by figures, that cannot lie. And I hold it to be quite as true of the productive capacity of the man who follows the plough, and the woman who manages the dairy, as of those who sit at the loom. Why does the manufacturer, by such a settled rule, earn more for himself or herself, and of course for the employer, in proportion as he or she has been to school? Because of his and her better habits of industry, regularity, and order; because of their greater prudence and ingenuity. They know better the worth of time; they understand the propriety and convenience of rules; they use the materials they have in hand with more judgment and economy. They are not perpetually breaking their threads by careless handling, and losing their time to mend them. If their machine gets out

* Fifth Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, p. 98.

of order, they can perhaps contrive to mend it, without taking up the time of the overseer. And these things, I believe your better experience will avouch me, have all their parallel on a farm. Master and man, mistress and milkmaid, will all do their work the better for the knowledge they have gained, and the habits they have formed, at school. And so the intelligence and vigor of the Massachusetts cultivator ought to prove themselves more than a match for the mere Bœotian fertility of Pennsylvania land.

Again; agriculture ought to flourish in Massachusetts because of *the density of her population*. We number more than a hundred inhabitants to the square mile, more than any other State in the Union, and more than twice as many, I believe, as any State out of New England. What gave this advantage to Massachusetts? Clearly and certainly, the superior intelligence, character, cultivation, and habits of her citizens, enabling them to produce more means of living within the same space, and causing them to constitute a peculiarly eligible community to live with and among. And these causes, in continued and increased operation, ought to produce the same effect still more manifestly, and the effect in turn ought to react beneficially on them. We have not too many people in Massachusetts for good cultivation. On the contrary we have not nearly enough; and so far as we have a more dense population than other States, so far we are better off than they in respect to our capacity for agricultural wealth. Massachusetts could support two millions of people on her soil, — I do not know but I might say, three millions, — in more abundance than she supports her eight hundred thousand now. The great secret of European success in agriculture is stated to be “much labor on comparatively little land.” In England, there are three hundred inhabitants to the square mile. In Holland, there are nearly four hundred, the agriculture of the latter country, on account of the need of dyking and draining, being carried on with great labor and expense. But the fields and pastures reclaimed from the salt sea are all a garden, where nature spreads out to the traveller’s eye the promise of the rich recompense she has in store for the intelligent industry of man.

When we have learned to apply as we ought to this all-important interest the intelligence, activity, and skill of which we have such an abundant supply, then there will no longer be or seem any need for the brothers who have been brought up together on a farm to disperse to the ends of the earth seeking their fortunes, because the old homestead is not large enough to give them all a living ; — engaging in trade, in which ninety-five out of every hundred fail, always under circumstances of temptation, always with great distress, if they have proper feelings, and quite too often with dishonor and shame, — or wandering away to some wild region of the West, to begin life in a state of society a hundred years behind what they leave, afar from friends and kindred, and the blessed associations of natal soil, away from the sound of the church-going bell, from the school-house, the library, the lyceum, the social village circle, renouncing for themselves and those who are to come after them the privileges, and honor, and joy, that belong to the happy spot of their birth-place, turning their back on their patrimonial share in all that has made the noble Commonwealth illustrious in time past, and all that, if hopeful auguries do not deceive, is to illustrate her more and more in time to come.

Under existing circumstances, I incline to think that the most valuable man, — the best citizen, — Massachusetts has to show, is the farmer who teaches his three or four sons each to raise as much from their share of the family estate as their parent raised from the whole. It is speaking within bounds to say, that a more careful and skilful cultivation would accomplish this result in the average of the farms of Massachusetts. England has tripled or quadrupled her bread-stuffs within about the age of man. Why should not Massachusetts multiply her products in the same ratio ? The last thirty years of peace, — an unprecedented period in the history of man for the temple of Janus to be shut, — have given opportunity for talent and ingenuity to be turned from the arts of destruction that plague the race to the arts of production that bless it, and the inventions and improvements of this happy period have been for the benefit of the cause of agriculture as much as any other. Your Association, though the oldest county society

in the Commonwealth, still dates within the century ; but it has lived long enough to witness and aid the most important improvements, and I find it stated by your committee on farms of last year, that “farming in general is now going ahead with greater speed in Middlesex, than at any former period within the eighteen years” that individuals of the committee have served. / Let it come, or let it approach, among us to the result I have indicated, and what vast, untold blessings would it diffuse ! What a new strength would it give to domestic and social ties ! What a new stability would it impart to pursuits and character ! With what a stimulus would it act on the inventive powers ! How would it enlarge the general wealth ! How would it push forward a genuine civilization, — simple, elegant, and Christian, — by giving it the advantages of a numerous community, and at the same time keeping it pure and healthy by country occupations, and safe from the vitiating influence of the hot city crowds !

Farmers, your children, generally speaking, have capacity enough for usefulness to themselves and others. God has bestowed it. You can give them education enough. A wisely provident ancestry has taken care of that. You can give them land enough, if you will but teach them to think and to make it so. I repeat it, I know no more honorable object for a right-minded farmer to propose to himself, than to teach his sons, by economy, and by improvements learned by experiment and observation, or from books, each to get a comfortable living on his portion of the paternal acres ; just as the Roman farmer, in the classical story, portioned off one daughter after another on a full share of his vineyard, reserving for himself only as much as he gave to each one, and yet continued to produce just as much as when he possessed the whole. Such a farmer is a good economist ; he is laying up the best resource for his old age, in keeping his children about him, with their affectionate society. He is a good parent, for he provides for those who look to him the best chances of respectability and happiness. He is a good patriot, for he does his part towards making the community stable, well ordered, prosperous, and safe. Am I told that I speak without experience on this matter ? I do not speak with the experience of

a farmer, but I do with that of a life of more than fifty years, including some observation on the ups and downs of those who began that life with me. And that experience teaches me, calculating the chances of life, to regard the skilful tiller of the ground as enjoying far above the average share of the prospects of real respectability, competency, and happiness. Length of days is in the right hand of that primitive occupation, and in its left hand sufficient riches and true honor. The returns made under the authority of the Commonwealth, for the year 1845, in relation to vital statistics, give to the agriculturists an average of thirteen years longer life than any other occupation. And as for that practical wisdom which is the gray hair unto men, and that unspotted life which is the most desirable old age, let one fact suffice by way of illustration of the moral influence of turning over the soil. The master of the Boston House of Correction, who has had all sorts of subjects under his charge, and among them, I fear, a sprinkling of professional gentlemen, says that never yet did a single gardener come into the eustody of his four walls.

Gentlemen, whoever is sincere in any proposal is disposed himself to set an example of what he recommends. Suppose we every man of us undertake to do our own part towards making Massachusetts the garden of America. Who would not help to do this, too, for Massachusetts?—the most privileged community, I believe in my soul, that that bright sun looks down upon, long marked by travellers from abroad as the bright spot of this nation, and in all essentials of human welfare better off than any out of the country, that may excel it in the refinements of an elaborate and fastidious civilization. Who would not wish to help decorate her with the crowning grace of bearing every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food? Our part will have to be done within the limits of this county. Suppose we every man of us undertake to do our part towards making Middlesex the garden of Massachusetts. We shall not have to begin at the beginning. Nature has made a magnificent beginning for us; and the skill of many of our fellow-citizens has already made great advances in perfecting the work. Where are the valleys that smile more genially on the bright waters that part them, than those of

our Charles and Merrimack, our Concord and Nashua, our Sudbury and Assabet, our Mystic and Malden? Without disparagement to other towns in the Commonwealth, in Middlesex or out of it, we have perhaps a township in this county, our Marlborough, as fertile as any, — and another, our Framingham, as well cultivated as any, — within the fair borders of Massachusetts. We have the land that waits, and will promptly reward our labor with its teeming growth. We have the men, at the rate of not fewer than a hundred and twenty or thirty to the square mile, with their strong sinews and their intelligent minds, to turn it to good use; and we have in abundance those patient and well-trained dumb servants in a lower order of creation, who help us break it up, and who give back for us to each coming harvest part of the nutriment which it yielded to them in the last. We have more horses, neat cattle, and swine, we raise more potatoes and Indian corn, and make more butter, than any other county, one excepted, that of Worcester. We cut more hay than any county except two, those of Worcester and Berkshire. As to milk and honey, the delights of the chosen land, we collect more than six thousand pounds of the latter, and of the former we send to market nearly three times as much as any other county. We raise more fruit than any other, and more than twice as many esculent vegetables. And for nursery gardens, what more is to be said than that the paradises of Winship and Warren, of Hovey and Kenrick, of Hyde and Stone, and I know not how many others more or less like them, are within our limits?

Let this go on, and how we will make our Middlesex a name and a praise! I said just now, suppose we every man of us undertake to do our part towards this result. But I said this in my haste and inconsideration. Every man of us may do his best, and still we shall fail, unless every woman, too, lends her aid. The gentle but effective agency of woman cannot be spared out of any sphere of honorable endeavour. As of other spheres, so she is the inspiring and regulating spirit, the tutelary genius, the guardian angel, of the farm. If the husband, father, and brother are to go out to the field with the jocund, elastic spirits which double the strength of the

hands for labor, they must be dismissed at early morning, and welcomed at eve, with the affectionate smiles of sister, daughter, and wife. They must come home to a well-kept dwelling, and gather to the sober recreation of a neat and plentiful board ; and they must look back and forward through the week to Sabbaths refreshing to the heart and soul through the blessed communications of domestic intelligence and love. Take care of this, — daughters of Middlesex, wives, sisters, — and if there be any other name tender enough to be named along with these, — take care of this, — rather, I should say, continue to take care of it as you have done heretofore, — and yours shall deservedly be a full half of the praise of all that the sterner power of man shall accomplish to enrich and beautify our home.

And so, fellow-citizens, we will add one object more of liberal curiosity to those which the intelligent stranger comes in quest of to our neighbourhood. Is he in search of the wonders of machinery and manufacturing skill ? Already he turns his steps, before all other places, to our Waltham and Lowell. Is he a student of history, — is he an American patriot, — and do the battle-fields of liberty attract his pilgrim step ? He will scarcely do better than to climb the famous hill of our Charlestown, or to come where we have come to-day, to the old bridge of Concord, and fill his mind with the sublimity of heroic thought. Would he see a pattern college, and, gathered around it, a company of scholars not unknown to fame ? If he does not stop at our Cambridge, he may be likely to go further and fare worse. Is he a connoisseur in railroads ? When he has rattled (glided, rather) over our Lowell and Fitchburg, he may be satisfied for life with that kind of sight-seeing, on the principle that every greater contains in itself the less. Would he see, in this new America of ours, a rival of the old Roman aqueducts ? We will conduct him, two or three years hence, to the arches of our Cochituate. Has he cooled his summer draughts in London or Calcutta with lumps of frosty crystal, and would he see in what busy laboratories of nature the refreshing alchemy was done ? We will take him to the vast roofs that line the margin of our delicious Fresh Pond, and point him to the capacious *granaries* where we store

the rich crop of our winter harvest. Would he look at the herds and flocks from a thousand hills, that have been diligently made to cover their own ribs thick, that they may next clothe the ribs of man? He must give us a market Monday morning at our Brighton. Has he a taste for the princely villas where prodigal art and wealth have seconded most happily the prodigality of nature? He must spend the afternoon with us at our Watertown and Waltham. Does he know what true greatness is, and would he look at a spot where some of the farmers' boys were nurtured, whose name has become a synonyme for a better than royal munificence to worthy public objects? We will take him to the homestead of an old soldier of Bunker Hill, now gone to his sacred rest in our Groton. Would he seek a spot where most tranquilly and profitably he may meditate on the everlasting loveliness of nature, and the short date of the greatness, the passions, and the labors of man? Let him lose himself in the close embowering groves and monumental splendor of our Mount Auburn. Would he turn from these to the scenes of man's most vigorous activity, and look at once at the most graceful structure of man's art, and the wonderful vehicle of his enterprise and courage? The ship-yards of our Medford invite him to witness that attractive spectacle in its most elaborate perfection. Has he an eye for the beauty of inferior animated nature, and a sensible estimate of the vast utility of its beneficent agency for man? The Ten Hills stock will yield him a genuine holiday. And does he say, at the end of all, I will now look at the farms in this extraordinary neighbourhood; surely, the lands cultivated by men of this mould must be a charm to the eye and the mind. Farmers of Middlesex, we will take care that he shall not be disappointed in that either. We will take care that he shall not need to be at the expense of travelling out of our county limits, to see the best of every thing that is to be seen anywhere.

Fellow-citizens, pardon me yet a word more, and, if it seems to be in a preaching strain, pardon it to the old and fixed habits of life of him who addresses you. *Cultivate the farmer*, while you cultivate the farm. Cultivate the farmer, that you may the better cultivate the farm; and do the same thing for yet higher purposes. The time has quite gone by, when scholarship was

a profession. There are scholars, men of sense, knowledge, and accomplishment, in all professions and all walks ; and sometimes the most brilliant lights break out in some unexpected orbit. Our Franklin was a printer's boy ; our Godfrey, a glazier ; our Rittenhouse, a watchmaker ; our learned blacksmith is even now greeted by the applause of Europe ; and the farm-houses have constantly supplied, and are constantly supplying, in their manly nurslings, a great proportion of our highest names in learning. The farmer is already a cultivated man. My little experience of public life, which has been in the halls of our own legislature, has brought me well to the knowledge of that fact. I have there seen farmers among the most effective debaters. They brought to the work minds trained in the trusts of our towns, those firm, sagacious, well ordered democracies, which did the great work of the country in its revolutionary crisis, and have been doing it ever since. But the farmers make many more good speeches than they utter. Time and again, the farmer supplies the facts, suggests the arguments, furnishes the sense, which orators more voluble and self-possessed produce with vast applause. In another way they make good speeches which they do not pronounce. I have made some speeches, such as they were, and I know by experience the power which the silent hearer's eye and ear exerts over the debater's tongue ; how the expression of countenance with which the intelligent, plain man listens will rebuke shallowness, parade, pretence, and all forms of nonsense, and compel the speaker to speak to the point ;— and if that is not helping materially to make a good speech, I confess I know not what it is.

Cultivate the farmer's mind. "As ye abound in every thing, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, see that ye abound in this grace also" ; see that ye "abound yet more and more, in knowledge, and in all judgment." The theory and the practice of our institutions is, that the people are the rulers ; and the justification of the theory, and the happy application of the practice, require that the rulers should be men of sagacity, intelligence, and information. After all, the mass of the people everywhere are tillers of the ground, and, whatever advantages may be allowed to other positions, the farmer possesses some eminent privileges for realizing the ideal

of our form of government, and presenting the truest specimen of the simplicity, the independence, the refinement, and the force of republican virtue. Let the Massachusetts farmer, in all that dignifies humanity and makes life happy, pure, generous, and useful, be the pattern farmer of the Union. Do you endeavour that the Middlesex farmer shall be the pattern yeoman of Massachusetts. Take liberal and thoughtful care of your common schools. Who can tell the good that is accomplished by those fruitful nurseries of all that is capable, and worthy, and honorable in man or woman ? Who can calculate the increased good that would be insured by every improvement in their management and condition ? Who can compute the immeasurable blessings they dispense over the country, furnishing the young freeman with those resources and principles which make him that wise and honest man who is "the noblest work of God" ? Take care of your churches ; consecrate your family altars ; reap and glean, to the last sheaf, the treasures of priceless wisdom in your Bibles ; rear up the hopes of the next generation in the health and life giving "nurture and admonition of the Lord." What is man without close ties to his Heavenly Parent ? What is there fair in human intercourse, what is there firm in the fabric of human society, but what religion has bestowed ?

Husband for yourselves and yours your winter evenings, and your other opportunities of profitable leisure. The time has been when books, that is, when the companionship and communications of the highest minds, were within the reach of only a privileged minority. A parental government has now well provided for that want. A man now bearing one of the highest names in letters which the country boasts has told me, that, when first the worth of knowledge broke upon his mind, the only food for it accessible to him in the scanty resources of his neighbourhood was a torn copy of Gulliver's Travels, and an odd volume of Addison's Spectator. These he read over and over again, and the charm of style which then fascinated his mind planted the seed which has since sprung up into such a magnificence of growth. Among us, no such peril of famine to an aspiring mind can ever again occur. Four years ago, our Commonwealth, with a liberality never more

judiciously bestowed, took measures for placing a small but well selected library within two or three miles of every hearth-stone in Massachusetts. You need not envy now any man's advantages of intellectual intercourse. You need not covet the society of the gifted and accomplished minds of the time. For every farmer, when he sits down after the labors of the day, with wife and sons and daughters around him, may call the highest minds of all ages, past and present, to the quiet communion of the settle by his kitchen fire. He may bid Shakspeare, and Milton, and Bacon, and Locke, and Channing, and Prescott, welcome to his simple home, and they will sit down and converse with him, and give him their best thoughts, for as many hours as he can spare from repose.* And every one who has had the experience of a life of mere study, and opportunity to compare it with a life of labor and action, can tell how much more valuable is such well economized leisure, after the day's vigorous work abroad, than the tasks of a nervous and thought-jaded mind, and with what a greedier appetite, and a more just and appreciating taste, the instructive volume is devoured, when it is taken up as a recreation from out-door business and bodily toil.

Fellow-citizens, I have used too much of your time. I pray you forgive me this wrong. The subject is a vast, an exciting, and a profitable one, and such as may excuse some loquacity. I have still left many things unsaid that were in my thoughts. May the God of the bounteous harvest which now smiles around us make us duly grateful for his munificent provisions ! And may he from whom all good counsels, all holy desires, and all just works do proceed, stimulate us, one and all, to do what we may, in our several spheres, towards accomplishing our work, increasing our usefulness, blessing those who are dependent on us, honoring and enriching our parent Commonwealth, serving our beloved country, profiting our day and generation, and helping on our race !

* In one of Dr. Channing's discourses is a train of remark, from which, I believe, part of this language is borrowed. But I have it not at hand to compare. Let this be an acknowledgment of the plagiarism.